

human rights; (2) it is a state sponsor of terrorism; (3) several countries as well as international organizations have condemned Libya's selection as chair of the Commission; (4) the United States is appalled by the European Union's common position of abstention on the critical vote over Libya's selection as chair of the commission; (5) the Secretary of State should engage member countries to support the United States efforts to ensure that states that are gross violators of human rights or sponsors of terrorism not ascend to leadership positions in the United Nations.

Libya has a horrific human rights record. Citizens do not choose their leaders in free and fair elections, nor are they able to petition their government for redress of grievances. It uses summary judicial proceedings to suppress domestic opposition. Security forces torture prisoners during interrogations and as punishment. Security forces arbitrarily arrest and detain persons, and many prisoners are held incommunicado. Many political detainees are held for years without charge. There is not an independent judiciary that enforces legal rights of citizens, and citizens do not have the right to a fair public trial or to be represented by legal counsel. The government infringes on citizens' privacy rights, and citizens do not have the right to be secure in their homes or persons, or to own private property. Libya restricts freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and religion. Is this the type of country that should be charged with being the chair of a commission that promotes human rights? I think not.

Libya is one of seven countries on the State Department's list of state sponsors of terror. As I have said in the past, Libya has continued to acquire weapons of mass destruction and promote state-sponsored terrorism. Last year, our Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security said that there was no doubt that Libya seeks nuclear weapons. Furthermore, he said that Libya has produced at least 100 tons of different kinds of chemical weapons. It is antithetical to the United Nations' mission for peace that a state engaged in creating global havoc be in charge of one of its most important committees.

It is imperative that members of the international community do not retreat from their responsibility to ensure that those charged with monitoring human rights are not, in fact, grave violators themselves. We must not give credibility to countries which violate human rights and support terrorism. To do otherwise is to legitimize their practices.

Congress has recently made its policy clear with respect to Libya's alarming behavior. In 2001, Congress passed the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act of 2001, which President Bush signed into law in August 2001. I was an original co-sponsor of the bill, and in the Ways and Means Committee I argued in favor of extending the current sanctions in place against Iran and Libya for an additional five years. ILSA threatens the imposition of economic sanctions against foreign entities investing in Iran and Libya's energy sectors. ILSA combines deterrence (the possibility of sanctions) with presidential discretion (through broad waiver authority). ILSA has been very effective so far, the Congress overwhelmingly approved the reauthorization of legislation to keep the pressure on Libya and Iran to stop their pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and ballistics missile technology. Libya also remains hostile

to the State of Israel and may support terrorist activities against Israel.

Mr. Speaker, it is this great nation's hope that it can one day live in a world where it is not threatened by international terrorism and that human rights for all will be respected. The selection of Libya as chair to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights undermines these goals. I, therefore, urge the House to pass this resolution by a strong bipartisan vote.

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Chairman for bringing this important issue to the attention of the House and the American people.

Two years ago, many in this chamber were shocked when the United States was removed from the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and of the International Narcotics Control Board.

The U.S. was a founding member of the Human Rights Commission and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was its first Chair.

The U.S. spends more money fighting the use of illegal narcotics than any other nation in the world.

Despite these facts, some of our "friends"—and I use the term with increasing skepticism—at the United Nations felt it was more important that nations like Libya and Syria serve on the U.N. agency overseeing human rights and that the Netherlands—a country whose own Web page admits they will not enforce their drug laws—should serve in our place on a board designed to enforce drug laws.

Chairman HYDE stood up and led this body to call for the suspension of U.S. funds to the U.N. until we were reinstated on the Human Rights Commission. We are now back on that board.

I offered an amendment that passed this House to curtail our funding of the International Narcotics Control Board until we were returned to its membership. This year the U.S. was again shut out while Iran, Brazil and Nigeria were added to the Board.

We have seen that the United Nations does not learn from its mistakes. As former President Reagan might have said, "There they go again."

While we have been reelected to the Human Rights Commission, Libya has been elected to its Chairmanship. Think about that. Libya. A nation led by a brutal dictator who is known to sponsor international terrorism. Yet only two other nations joined the U.S. in opposing their election to head this prestigious body whose duty is to protect human rights. Eight European nations made the "courageous" decision to abstain.

And in an example of how momentum is the true ruler of the United Nations and its bloated bureaucracy, this year's meeting of the U.N. Conference on Disarmament will be presided over by Iraq—despite the fact that Iraq is under U.N. sanctions for failing to disarm and even now faces international action for this failure.

I wish I could tell you I was surprised.

But the United Nations has not been the effective body it could have been over the past two decades. Time and time again, the U.N. in recent years has done more harm than good.

I still believe the U.N. can be a useful body. One that helps promote dialogue and the exchange of ideas around the world. But many of its members have forgotten that respect is

earned through logical decisions that advance the security of the world—not by blindly following bureaucratic momentum that promotes rogue regimes at the expense of the greatest democracies in the world.

I truly hope that the actions we take here today send a message to the U.N. and its members that if they want the body to continue to be a force for good and progress in the world, they must think before they act and make decisions worthy of respect. The election of Libya to Chair the Human Rights Commission, and the continued exclusion of the U.S. from U.N. committees and boards, are not decisions of which they should be proud.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OTTER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 27.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

HONORING CZECH REPUBLIC PRESIDENT VACLAV HAVEL

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 22) honoring Czech Republic President Vaclav Havel.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 22

Whereas Vaclav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, is widely respected throughout the world as a proponent of democratic principles;

Whereas Vaclav Havel's superb skills as a playwright and essayist helped promote democracy in Eastern Europe during the Cold War;

Whereas the plays of Vaclav Havel were instrumental in bringing international attention to the struggle for democracy in Czechoslovakia;

Whereas Vaclav Havel was imprisoned three times for his efforts to promote democratic thought and reforms in communist Czechoslovakia, yet maintained his convictions throughout;

Whereas Vaclav Havel was a cofounder of the human rights organization Charter 77 and the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted;

Whereas Vaclav Havel, as leader of the Civic Forum movement, was a key figure in the 1989 bloodless overthrow of the Czechoslovakian communist government known as the Velvet Revolution;

Whereas following the Velvet Revolution, Vaclav Havel was elected by the people as President of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic in 1990, and following a peaceful split forming two separate states, elected President of the Czech Republic in 1993;

Whereas under the leadership of Vaclav Havel, the Czech Republic has been an important and valued member of the world community;

Whereas under the leadership of Vaclav Havel, the Czech Republic became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on March 12, 1999;

Whereas during Vaclav Havel's time in office, the economy of the Czech Republic has become one of the most developed in Eastern Europe;

Whereas today, the Czech Republic is a valuable ally of the United States in the war against terrorism;

Whereas Vaclav Havel has been praised as one of the world's great democratic leaders and has been awarded many international prizes recognizing his commitment to peace and democratic principles; and

Whereas Vaclav Havel will step down as President of the Czech Republic on February 2, 2003; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) honors the life-long commitment of Czech Republic President Vaclav Havel to human rights and democracy;

(2) recognizes the exceptional achievements of Vaclav Havel as playwright and president; and

(3) congratulates Vaclav Havel for his outstanding service to the people of the Czech Republic.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 22, the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nebraska?

There was no objection.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This Member rises today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 22, a resolution honoring Czech Republic President Vaclav Havel. The resolution was introduced by the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND), and this Member is pleased to be an original cosponsor. This resolution seeks to recognize, congratulate, and honor President Havel for a combination of 13 years of extraordinary service, first as President of Czechoslovakia and second, since 1993, as President of the Czech Republic. The Constitution of the Czech Republic allows a president to serve only two consecutive 5-year terms, and the United States House of Representatives would like, therefore, to honor President Havel upon the occasion of the end of his term of service on February 2 of this year.

Nearly 13 years ago, on February 21, 1990, President Vaclav Havel addressed a joint session of the United States Congress in this very room. This occasion was less than 4 months after his last arrest by what he characterized as "the most conservative Communist government in Europe," and less than 2 months after Vaclav Havel had been

elected President of Czechoslovakia, in December 1989, by a parliament still dominated by members of the Communist party.

During his inspirational speech to the joint session of Congress, President Havel said many things that made many Members of Congress realize they were not listening to just another political leader of a foreign country. President Havel, in his speech, was discussing what his country, and all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that had suffered throughout the Cold War, could learn from the United States. He also suggested that perhaps his country could offer something to the United States. In his speech, he stated "We too can offer something to you: our experience and the knowledge that has come from it. This is a subject for books, many of which have already been written and many of which have yet to be written. I shall therefore limit myself to a single idea. The experience I'm talking about has given me one great certainty: Consciousness precedes being, and not the other way around, as Marxists claim."

In explaining that axiom, Havel went on in his speech to explain that: "The only genuine backbone of all of our actions, if they are to be moral, is responsibility. Responsibility is something higher than our family, my country, my company, my success. Responsibility to the order of being where all of our actions are indelibly recorded and only where they will be properly judged. The interpreter or mediator between us and this higher authority is what is traditionally referred to as human conscience. If I subordinate my political behavior to this imperative mediated to me by my conscience, I can't go far wrong."

He went on to say that it is this responsibility dictated by his conscience which caused him to ultimately decide, after resisting for a long time, to accept the burden of political responsibility. In other words, he saw it as a responsibility to accept the presidency of Czechoslovakia. In a related noteworthy admonition to intellectuals in every country he reminded that "If the hope of the world lies in human consciousness, then it is obvious that intellectuals can't go on forever avoiding their share of the responsibility for the world and hiding their distaste for politics under an alleged need for independence."

As a playwright and essayist, Vaclav Havel was a leading figure of the dissident movement against the totalitarian system of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia. He was a founder of Charter 77, the underground movement seeking freedom of expression and association, and the basic protection of civic and human rights. He wrote the essay, "The Power of the Powerless," in which he called upon ordinary citizens to live in truth against a totalitarian regime. For his various civic reform efforts, he received multiple prison sentences and served a

total of almost 5 years imprisoned by the Communist regime.

During the events of November-December 1989, which have come to be known as the Velvet Revolution, Vaclav Havel helped form the Civic Forum, a broad coalition of dissident groups, which was the first legal opposition movement in Communist Czechoslovakia. By the end of that year, through a "bloodless revolution," 41 years of Communist dictatorship peacefully came to an end when Vaclav Havel was elected President.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I count it a great personal privilege and honor to represent perhaps more Czech-Americans than any Member of Congress. Most of them came to the rolling prairies of Nebraska and the prairie States in the 1870s and 1880s to own their own land and to farm the soil. Other Czechs and Slovaks came to the larger cities of the Midwest, places like Omaha, during the first two decades of the 20th century.

While their Americanization had occurred several generations ago, these Czech-Americans continued to follow closely, and I would say with great anguish, the totalitarian conditions of people in their old homelands of the past. It was, therefore, a particular pleasure for me to watch these Czech-Americans gather in the public meeting places, the restaurants, the bars, and in their homes to watch with amazement and great pride on television the rapid and peaceful Velvet Revolution, which finally ended the Communist stranglehold, to reclaim the democracy that Czechoslovakia had enjoyed only for the brief period between two World Wars.

Vaclav Havel epitomized this return to Czech democracy for both his countrymen and the Americans who watched and marveled at the success of the Velvet Revolution and Havel's leadership, which demonstrated the very best in intellectual and humane leadership.

Since then, President Havel has been an extraordinary politician, leading his country and the countries of Eastern Europe into a future of freedom, democracy, and security. He was probably the foremost proponent in Europe of allowing the former countries of the Warsaw Pact to join NATO. On March 12, 1999, his vision was made a reality when the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary became members of the Alliance. And just last November, his country was honored by hosting the first NATO Summit held behind the former Iron Curtain in Prague, where seven additional countries of Eastern Europe were invited to join the Alliance.

Because parliamentarians from the 19 NATO countries have honored me with the leadership in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, I was privileged to be present at the NATO Prague Summit in November of last year. I think it was noteworthy that President Havel, in his host capacity as the dean of all the

NATO heads of state and heads of government in length of service, was accorded an auspicious degree of affection and respect by his peers and other leaders of the Free World. That acclaim reflected not just his leadership for the Czech Republic but also recognized the moral leadership he has provided for all of the countries of Eastern and Central Europe that emerged from communism and, indeed, for the NATO Alliance as a whole.

On January 30 of this year, just 2 days before he was to step down after 13 years as President, he was one of eight European heads of state or government from NATO countries to sign a letter expressing continued solidarity and support with and to the United States in the international fight against terrorism and for possible action against Iraq. The importance of that letter really cannot be overestimated, since it stood in mark contrast to the dissenting positions of four countries, France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg.

Two sentences sum up the essence of that letter and what is most essential in the transatlantic relationship. The statement said: "The real bond between the U.S. and Europe is the values we share: democracy, individual freedom, human rights, and the rule of law. Today, more than ever, the transatlantic bond is a guarantee of our freedom."

□ 1500

Vaclav Havel has been called an artist, an intellectual, the poet of democracy, and an international icon of integrity, wisdom and moral seriousness, and even "the most extraordinary statesman who emerged from the struggle to overthrow communism in Eastern Europe." President Havel likes to say that in November 1989 when he was first told that he had been nominated as a candidate for the office of President of Czechoslovakia, he thought it was a joke. He thought who was he to be President of this new democracy.

This Member is here today to thank President Havel for saying yes and accepting the office of President, including the challenge of politics and public service. By simply choosing to continue to fight for the ideals he fought for during the Cold War, democracy, freedom, human rights and the rule of law, by working tirelessly to include the new central and eastern European democracies into Europe and the alliance, and through his efforts directed toward reconciliation with the old enemies, he has elevated politics and public service, for his country, for Europe, for the trans-Atlantic alliance, and for the world.

Mr. Speaker, this Member will quote from President Havel's first New Year's address to his nation, the newly free Czechoslovakia, on January 1, 1990. President Havel spoke to his fellow citizens about the legacy of over 40 years of the Communist totalitarian

system. He said, "It would be quite unreasonable to understand the sad legacy of the last 40 years as something alien, something bequeathed to us by some distant relative. On the contrary, we must accept this legacy as a sin we committed against ourselves. If we accept it as such, we will understand that it is up to us all, and up to us alone, to do something about it. We cannot blame the previous rulers for everything, not only because it would be untrue but also because it could blunt the duty each of us faces today, that is, the obligation to act independently, freely, reasonably, and quickly. Let us make no mistake: the best government in the world, the best parliament and the best president in the world cannot achieve much on their own. And it would also be wrong to expect a general remedy to come from them alone. Freedom and democracy require participation and therefore responsible action from us all."

Mr. Speaker, this Member joins his colleagues in paying tribute to Vaclav Havel for the vital, moral leadership and idealism he has brought to his service for the Czech Republic and to the community of Western democracies. For his countrymen and all of us in democratic nations, this leadership and focus on participatory democracy is in the best traditions of those heroes of the American democracy that we honor in this great capital city, Jefferson, Madison and others among our Founding Fathers. I urge support for the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I commend the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) for his powerful, eloquent, and thoughtful statement. I also would like to express my deep appreciation to the original sponsor and drafter of this most important resolution, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND), who has shown his customary leadership by presenting this to us.

Mr. Speaker, last week my good friend, Vaclav Havel, stepped down as President of the Czech Republic. Normally, Mr. Speaker, the return to private life of a democratically elected leader in Europe would not warrant a resolution from the Congress of the United States. But Vaclav Havel was no ordinary President, nor did he serve in ordinary times. Vaclav Havel, an outstanding artist, playwright, and the conscience of the Czech people during decades of Soviet domination, was a key player in the Velvet Revolution under which the Czech people peacefully replaced their communist dictators with an elected and inspiring leadership.

Mr. Speaker, it was a true privilege to have been in Prague to witness one small part of this Velvet Revolution. Thirteen years ago, I had just arrived in Prague on an official mission with

my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), his wife and my wife. Vaclav Havel and his allies had launched large public protests demanding democracy and an end to communist rule. As the gentleman from Missouri and I headed to a meeting, we encountered thousands of Prague residents in Wenceslas Square demonstrating in support of democracy and freedom. We jumped from the car and joined the Czech crowds waving signs and shouting "Havel Na Hrad," Havel to the castle.

The people of Prague were making a simple request, that Vaclav Havel be elected President so he could occupy the home of power and authority in Prague, the beautiful castle which stands on a hill overlooking the city.

These massive demonstrations were a small part of a long process that brought about the Velvet Revolution. Several weeks later, I had the honor of leading congressional colleagues to a meeting with Vaclav Havel when he was already safely ensconced in the castle.

President Havel did not let the Czech people down as their elected leader. He led the Czech nation through a difficult period of political and economic reform. As a result of his extraordinary leadership, Vaclav Havel presided over 13 years of growing Czech prestige and influence in international affairs. He devoted enormous thought and energy to bringing the Czech Republic into the community of Western democracies. Under his leadership, the Czech Republic joined NATO; and next year it is poised to join the European Union.

President Havel has been an unwavering ally of the United States in the war on terrorism, and more recently in our struggle to disarm the regime of Saddam Hussein. This should come as no surprise. Vaclav Havel is a person of great moral authority and enormous personal courage. He devoted his political and artistic life to resisting the totalitarian state. He cofounded the human rights organization Charter 77 and the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted. He was persecuted by communist authorities and repeatedly arrested. Once he was given the opportunity to emigrate, but he bravely chose imprisonment instead.

As President, Havel continued to resist authoritarian dictators by supporting dissidents in Cuba, and just last November by denying the Belarusian dictator, Lukashenko, a visa to the NATO Summit in Prague. I have no doubt that my friend, President Havel, will continue to work to ensure that the merging independent nations of Central and Eastern Europe join the community of democratic nations.

Mr. Speaker, it was a fitting end to President Havel's presidency that he and the Czech Republic were host to the historic NATO summit last November. The leaders of the world used the summit to pay tribute to the wisdom and leadership of Vaclav Havel and to

his remarkable achievements as President. I was honored to be part of the U.S. delegation to the Prague summit; and as I celebrated with Vaclav Havel the success of NATO in the castle overlooking Prague, I was once again struck by Vaclav Havel's long and bold journey from a prisoner of conscience to becoming the conscience of Europe.

I want to ask all of my colleagues to support this resolution commending a true friend of the United States, a leading intellectual figure in Europe, and a moral force sorely needed in Europe by supporting and voting for this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND), the author of this legislation.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I commend the ranking member of the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), and thank him for his leadership on a whole host of foreign policy issues. I also thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), the chairman of the committee, and especially the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) for the gentleman's help in offering this resolution, doing a Dear Colleague letter, and trying to inform the other Members of Congress of Mr. Havel's retirement.

Mr. Speaker, a silly person once said that only silly people have heroes today. If that is true, this silly person is not afraid to admit that Vaclav Havel is one of my heroes.

Today we honor Vaclav Havel who provided the moral force behind the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia in 1989, and who stepped down as President of the Czech Republic just 1 week ago. If proof is needed that the pen is mightier than the sword, then Vaclav Havel is a veritable smoking gun.

It is a magnificent irony that one of the most oppressive communist regimes in Eastern Europe would one day be led by a poet and playwright. But there is a tradition in this part of the world that intellectual integrity and independent art translate into raw political power. Mr. Havel provided the leadership through raw moral force that gave rise to the incredible and peaceful revolutionary movement which we now refer to as the Velvet Revolution.

As uncompromising in his resistance to the totalitarian state as he is in his ironic plays, President Havel withstood censure, numerous imprisonments, and the muzzle to become the premier symbol of Czechoslovakian dissidence in the years after the Soviet Union crushed Prague back in 1968.

He helped found the Charter 77 dissident movement, the moral blueprint for the revolution, and then formed the Civic Forum, the main opposition party in Czechoslovakia against the

communist regime. Through his clashes with the authority, he was repeatedly sent to prison. His essays setting out his ideas on national resurgence in a totalitarian state, "The Power of the Powerless," was widely studied inside and outside of Czechoslovakia.

In it, he argued that citizens living "in truth" could successfully confront and overturn dictatorial rulers. For his views, the regime forced him in 1979 to choose between exile or 5 years in prison. He chose prison and his enduring stature is partly a result of that choice. He later collected the letters he wrote from prison to his wife in a widely read volume, "Letters to Olga."

Mr. Speaker, as a recent graduate of law school back in 1990, I was in one of my short disillusioned states in regards to our own democracy at the time, but was watching with rapt attention the incredible frenzy of events in Eastern Europe leading to the collapse of the communist regimes and ultimately the collapse of the Berlin Wall. I had the opportunity to travel throughout Eastern Europe shortly after these revolutions took place. I spent a little time in Czechoslovakia where I was part of an international student group restoring some of the old castles in Czechoslovakia.

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It was during that time, Mr. Speaker, when I also met other political heroes of mine. These were students approximately my age who were, just a few months previously, literally on the front lines of these demonstrations, literally staring down the guns of the Communist forces, knowing their history, but also not knowing whether this would be a repeat of the Prague Spring in 1968, which resulted in a bloody massacre.

I met and stayed with many of these students and I asked them what they were thinking during that time, those fateful couple of weeks in November of 1989. They responded that two things stood out in their minds: one, how bitterly cold it was during those nights during the candlelight vigils, standing out in Wenceslas Square, snow coming down and they were all shivering; and, secondly, how terribly frightened they were.

History now shows that by a vote of 5 to 4, the Communist Politburo decided not to order the troops to open fire on these demonstrators.

It was a lot of these same students who would during the day go out into the countryside and into the homes and villages and town squares throughout Czechoslovakia, bringing news of the demonstrations and the movement building against the Communist regime. They understood that it required the support of the working families, the workers of Czechoslovakia, before the regime could ultimately be brought down.

In the midst of all of this was their guiding force, Vaclav Havel, whom they held in high esteem, and still do

today based on the correspondence that I have with them. It was an inspiring time for me to meet these young people and to understand that they realized that there were causes greater than themselves worth fighting for and perhaps worth dying for. It was literally their future that was on the line. Through the strength of their collective action, they achieved remarkable change throughout Eastern Europe.

In 1989 and after, President Havel's genius was not just to harness popular resistance that peacefully overwhelmed the Communist regime; it was to understand that to take the trappings of leadership did not mean to betray his own humanity. He was not, however, immune to political defeat. He resigned temporarily rather than preside during the bitter separation of Czechoslovakia back in 1993. But internationally he shone. He led his country into NATO in 1999 and he has positioned them now to join the European Union next year, in 2004.

When Havel left the presidency after 13 years, he left behind a legacy of individual moral authority. It is hard to find a defined political legacy. Instead, he leaves a sense that in the life of any nation, the character of its leaders do matter.

They are still wrestling to find his replacement today in the Czech Republic. A great debate rages, even bickering is taking place, and, of course, the media and the press are more than eager to report on all of this in the Czech Republic.

For those freedoms, for his service and his sacrifice and for his shining moral example, it is only right that the United States Congress pause in our normal duties of the day to give thanks and to pay tribute to one of the greatest leaders of the 20th century, Vaclav Havel.

I am sure all of my colleagues wish him much happiness throughout his retirement.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my friend from Wisconsin for a truly moving and powerful statement.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to join in commending the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) for his articulate statement and his initiative. This matter would have been taken up last week if it had not been for the schedule change because of the Columbia disaster.

I urge strong support by all the Members for this resolution.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, Vaclav Havel is sometimes called the "conscience of the Czech Republic." In fact, he could be called the conscience of the world. As both playwright and president, he has set an example for his country men and women and inspired others around the globe.

As a Member serving on the Helsinki Commission, I first became aware of Vaclav Havel and his stance as a leader of the Charter '77

human rights movement. At a time when most Czechoslovaks preferred to keep their heads low, he held his up. When others dared not speak out, he raised his voice. While others hid from communism in their apartments and weekend cottages, he faced it down in prison. In recognition of his extraordinary leadership and courage, the Commission leadership recommended him for the Nobel Peace Prize in February 1989.

Vaclav Havel once wrote of the "power of the powerless" and, on November 17, 1989, when the Velvet Revolution began, the world saw that power manifested in reality.

Mr. Speaker, Vaclav Havel is a man who has always been guided by the courage of his convictions. Remarkably, his courage did not fade upon his assumption of the presidency. Indeed, he is all the more heroic for his remaining steadfast to his commitment to human rights even from the comforts of the Prague Castle.

From the beginning of his tenure, as he addressed his country's communist and totalitarian past, he was a voice of reason, not revenge. In 1993, he rightly identified the situation of Roma as "a litmus test for civil society." Throughout his presidency, he has pardoned those facing criminal charges under communist-era laws that restrict free speech and have yet to be repealed. In 2001, he spoke out against the parliament's regressive religion law, which turned the clock back on religious freedom. He has raised human rights issues from Cuba to China. And, he has reminded other world leaders of our shared responsibility for the poor and less fortunate.

H. Con. Res. 22 pays tribute to Vaclav Havel's singular compassion, integrity, and vision. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting a man who has given so much to his country and the world.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OTTER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 22.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

COMMENDING ISRAEL ON THEIR ELECTIONS

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 61) commending the people of Israel for conducting free and fair elections, reaffirming the friendship between the Governments and peoples of the United States and Israel, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 61

Whereas the United States and Israel are close allies whose people share a deep and

abiding friendship based on a shared commitment to democratic values;

Whereas since its establishment in 1948, Israel has fulfilled the dreams of its founders who envisioned a vigorous, open, and stable democracy;

Whereas an essential feature of Israeli democracy is its system of competitive, free, and open elections;

Whereas on January 28, 2003, the people of Israel elected Israel's 16th Knesset, or Parliament, which in turn will choose the Prime Minister of Israel; and

Whereas the election on January 28, 2003, is the most recent example of the commitment of Israel to the democratic ideals of freedom and pluralism, ideals that Israel shares with the United States

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the people of Israel for reaffirming their dedication to democratic ideals as expressed in the election on January 28, 2003;

(2) expresses both its respect for the freely expressed will of the people of Israel, and its intention to engage in constructive relations with the new Government of Israel, and urges the international community to do so as well;

(3) reaffirms the close bonds of friendship that have bound the people of the United States and the people of Israel together through turbulent times for more than half a century;

(4) urges the Palestinian leadership to abide by its commitments made to the United States and to Israel and urges the Palestinian people to act on President Bush's call of June 24, 2002, to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, end incitement to violence in official media, elect new leaders not compromised by terror, and embrace democracy; and

(5) restates the commitment of the United States to a secure peace for Israel.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to thank my colleague, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR), for introducing this important resolution commending the people of Israel for conducting free and fair elections and reaffirming the close friendship between our two nations.

Virtually since its creation in 1948, the state of Israel has been the only democratic ally of the United States in the region. Today, it is the only country in the Middle East with truly free elections, a vibrant free press, an active civil society and other elements which constitute a free society, mak-

ing it indeed the only country in the Middle East classified as free by Freedom House in its report on democracy and human rights in the region.

Its declaration of independence, its system based on separation of powers, particularly its emphasis on an independent judiciary, its guarantee of equal access for women and minorities, and its guarantee of freedom of religion to the entire population are but some of the parallels that we share, which further strengthen the bonds between our countries. However, our nations share more than just democratic principles.

Regrettably, we have both been victimized by terrorism, the common enemy of the civilized world. The continuing terrorist attacks against Israel clearly follow the pattern of attacking democratic countries which support and implement the rule of law, mistaking the openness and tolerance of such societies as a sign of weakness. Israel is targeted in part because it is our friend and in part because it is an oasis of liberal, democratic values in a vast expanse of authoritarian regimes, fanaticism and bigotry.

As a liberal democracy under repeated attack by murderers who target innocent men, women and children, Israel deserves our steadfast support. This support is essential to Israel's continued survival as a free and democratic nation, for only the United States has the power and political will to provide meaningful assistance to the only parliamentary democracy in the region.

While we may have shared interests with Arab states in the Middle East, it is with Israel that we share core values. As it was in Afghanistan, U.S. foreign policy should be about more than geostrategic concerns. It should also reflect who we are as a nation and as a people.

There is an expression in Spanish which says, loosely translated, "Tell me who your friends are and I'll tell you who you are." Let then the U.S. be judged by its friendship and by its partnership with Israel, the region's truly free, democratic society.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support the gentleman from Virginia's resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. First I would like to pay tribute to my good friend, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR), for introducing this legislation. I rise in strong support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, friendship with Israel and support for its security are unshakable elements of U.S. foreign policy. The primary reason for these close relationships is not just our strategic interests, but our shared values. Democracy and freedom form the core values of both the United States and of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, that is why the occasion of Israelis going to the polls as